

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 23, 2014

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #6 – UPDATE ON FY2015 – FY 2020 CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY (CMAQ) AND REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS (RSTP)

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**ISSUE:** Update on the FY2015 – FY2020 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) project funding requests.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission receive the update on changes to the FY2015 – FY2020 CMAQ/RSTP program and provide input on FY2021 CMAQ/RSTP priorities.

**DISCUSSION:** Since 1993-1994, the Commonwealth has allocated CMAQ and RSTP funding to the northern Virginia region. CMAQ funds are allocated to metropolitan regions that do not meet Clean Air Act regulations. These funds must be used for activities that improve air quality and cannot be used to increase the capacity of roadways. The new federal transportation legislation (MAP-21) placed considerable emphasis on diesel engine retrofits and other efforts that underscore the priority on reducing fine particle pollution (PM 2.5). RSTP funds are very flexible funds that can be used for a wide range of regional transportation activities.

The annual funding allocations for the entire region typically total approximately \$30 million for CMAQ funds and \$40 million for RSTP funds. The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) distributes the funds to the jurisdictions based on jurisdiction requests.

In 2012, the Commonwealth adopted its first multi-year plan for CMAQ and RSTP funds. For the last two years, a six-year plan has been approved by Transportation Commission and Council and forwarded to NVTA.

The Transportation Commission and City Council approved a FY2015 – FY2020 CMAQ/RSTP funding in September 2013 (Attachment 1). The requests were reviewed by jurisdictional staff and a recommended set of projects was submitted to the NVTA Board for approval. Following the City's submission, several circumstances resulted in changes to the proposed program:

1. In the past, the City was able to transfer funds amongst already-approved projects in addition to adding an additional year of funding, and this is what the Transportation Commission and City Council approved. For the FY2015 – FY2020 program, VDOT decided to accept proposals for new FY2020 funds only and did not allow any transfers among approved FY2015 – FY2019 projects.
2. In the fall of FY2014, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) signed an agreement requiring that all FHWA funds intended for transit vehicle purchases (including CMAQ funds) be flexed to FTA. DASH, however, cannot accept FTA funds.
3. The City received new Commonwealth transportation dollars (NVTA 30% and 70% funds), creating an opportunity for staff to evaluate how to most efficiently use City and grant funds.
4. City Council approved the use of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding for broader transportation related expenditure. Significant TIP funding was directed to street resurfacing and new funding sources needed to be identified for several projects previously funded through the TIP.
5. The Six Year Improvement Program adopted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in June 2014 reflected reductions in CMAQ funds that affected several City projects.<sup>1</sup>

To address the issues above, during the FY2015 budget process, staff recommended funding DASH vehicle purchases using NVTA 30% funds and transferring existing CMAQ funds from DASH vehicle purchases to other eligible projects, including Backlick Run, Old Cameron Run, and future phases of ITS Integration. Because these are changes from the City's original FY2015 – FY202 submission, the fund transfers require NVTA approval. Staff submitted a request for several transfers in June 2014. The request also included transfers that would better align the program with the September 2013 program recommended by the Transportation Commission (Attachment 2).

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<sup>1</sup> These reductions were not captured in the FY2015 – FY2024 CIP and will be updated during the FY2016 budget process.